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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 40th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. MONGBE (Benin)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 103: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE TO ALLEVIATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR IN CROATIA AND TO FACILITATE ITS RECOVERY (continued)

Draft resolution on international cooperation and assistance to alleviate the consequences of war in Croatia and to facilitate its recovery (A/C.2/48/L.26)

1. Mr. SACIRBEY (Bosnia and Herzegovina), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, who had been joined by Ukraine, said that, in the list of sponsors, Tunisia should be replaced by Turkey. His country, like Croatia, was suffering the consequences of aggression by Serbia and Montenegro. He recalled that, because of the historic ties of friendship between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, that country was still sheltering some 270,000 Bosnian refugees, despite the damage to its housing infrastructure, roads, railways and hospitals, the disruption of its inland water transport because of the occupation of a portion of its territory, and the cutting off of its main source of revenue, tourism. While the end of the occupation did not appear to be in sight, the measures provided for in the draft resolution could help to alleviate the gravity of the situation.

AGENDA ITEM 169: ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO STATES AFFECTED BY THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS IMPOSING SANCTIONS AGAINST THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA (SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO) (continued)

Draft resolution on economic assistance to States affected by the implementation of the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) (A/C.2/48/L.27)

2. Mr. PASHOVSKI (Bulgaria), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors, said that the implementation of the Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) had placed an extraordinary burden on several States in the region, especially the States bordering on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the Danube riparian States and had impaired their economic development; accordingly, it was urgent for the international community to take steps to preserve and strengthen security and stability in the region. All Member States must ensure the implementation of the measures adopted by the Security Council and, at the same time, take appropriate steps to alleviate their adverse consequences for third countries. The sponsors trusted that the draft resolution would receive broad support.

AGENDA ITEM 91: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(d) ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (continued)

Draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community (A/C.2/48/L.25)

3. Mr. SEBINA (Botswana) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the sponsors and said that, as the text was very similar to the one submitted in previous years, it was to be hoped that it would be supported by the Committee.

(e) ENVIRONMENT (continued) (A/48/25, A/48/451 and Corr.1, A/48/272-S/26108 and A/48/552; A/C.2/48/2 and A/C.2/48/6)

(f) DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT (continued) (A/48/216-E/1993/92 and A/48/552; A/C.2/48/6)

(g) HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (continued) (A/48/8 and Add.1 and A/48/37)

AGENDA ITEM 99: IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/48/182, A/48/291-S/26242, A/48/294-S/26247, A/48/309, A/48/338, A/48/359, A/48/401, A/48/427, A/48/442, A/48/484-S/26552, A/48/485, A/48/552 and A/48/563; A/C.2/48/4 and A/C.2/48/6)

(a) ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA (continued) (A/48/226 and Add.1 and A/48/564)

(b) GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (continued) (A/48/36 and A/48/564)

(c) SUSTAINABLE USE AND CONSERVATION OF THE MARINE LIVING RESOURCES OF THE HIGH SEAS: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON STRADDLING FISH STOCKS AND HIGHLY MIGRATORY FISH STOCKS (continued) (A/48/479)

4. Mr. AL-HARTHY (Oman) emphasized the importance of the environment and the need to use natural resources properly and to prevent their degradation, which could endanger the very existence of mankind on Earth. Since a sound environment was essential to development, and as natural resources, such as clean air, water, forests and other energy sources, were needed for current and future generations, they should be regarded as a gift from God, which all societies were duty-bound to preserve.

5. For that reason, his Government was represented in various organizations committed to safeguarding the environment, and was seeking, through monitoring and information campaigns, to raise public awareness of the importance of those issues. For nine years, public contests had been held on the theme of the preservation of the environment. In addition, various projects had been carried out and legislation had been enacted for the protection of the environment, under which all new industries must have a licence guaranteeing that they would

(Mr. Al-Harthy, Oman)

not contaminate the environment. Furthermore, Oman planned to implement, in the following year, an integrated programme focusing on coastal areas, and also envisaged measures for the conservation of endangered animal species. In addition, every two years, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) prize relating to the environment was awarded at the national level, and research on the subject was being carried out.

6. Mr. SEBINA (Botswana) said that a significant proportion of the population and land area of the world was affected by drought and desertification and experienced their adverse impact on development, and that in the developing countries poverty was both a cause and an effect of desertification. Botswana was an arid and semi-arid country where, because of chronic drought and desertification, the depletion of rangeland pastures, deforestation and ground water reduction had become common features. In the southwestern part of the country, loss of groundcover was encouraging wind erosion and sand dune formation. Income from agriculture, on which the majority of the people depended, was being eroded and, in addition, many communities were in short supply of important natural resources like water and fuelwood.

7. Over the past decade, Botswana had been experiencing a severe drought, exposing a majority of the people to critical conditions. While relief measures had been taken, his Government was aware that they would not solve such serious problems and recognized that they needed to be complemented by preparedness and prevention policies. In that context, Botswana was participating in regional programmes under the auspices of the United Nations and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) designed to combat drought and desertification. In view of the lack of financial and other resources that were hampering those programmes, Botswana appealed to the international community to provide more support. Also, after having taken part in both the first and second sessions of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa, it hoped that the instrument would be adopted in July 1994 as scheduled and that the international community would make concerted efforts to implement it.

8. Mr. OK (Cambodia) underscored the links between the environment and development, which had been given special attention by the developed and developing countries. His delegation was fully aware of the need to find common solutions to regional and world problems. After 20 years of war, Cambodia had not only endured the loss of economic, human and cultural resources but had also sustained serious harm to its environment and its development. The economy of Cambodia was based preponderantly on agriculture, mining and cattle raising, activities that depended to a considerable extent on environmental factors. Its major problems, which were deforestation, drought, floods, erosion and atmospheric and water pollution, could entail the almost irreversible loss of essential biological resources and heighten the imbalances and the contamination of the biosphere.

9. In order to put an end to that intolerable situation and do what it could to promote environmental protection and development, his Government was pursuing

(Mr. Ok, Cambodia)

a policy of sustainable development that included the establishment of production systems and of measures for the rational and effective exploitation of the country's natural heritage, and the strengthening of regional cooperation on the basis of respect for the sovereignty of nations and their reciprocal interests and for international law. His Government's efforts to protect the environment, however, might have only a limited reach, because the country had to deal before all else with the pressing fundamental problems of economic and political stability and social progress. It was to be hoped that the industrialized countries would, in the spirit of the Rio Conference, continue assisting Cambodia and the other developing countries so as to implement Agenda 21 effectively.

10. The solution of environmental and development problems which affected all humankind required large scale, effective international cooperation based on respect for the sovereignty of States, because although each country had a sovereign right over its own natural resources, it was unthinkable that it should use or develop them to the detriment of other countries.

11. Mr. LAKATOS (Hungary) said that experience had shown that the environmental aspects of socio-economic activities could not be overlooked, even when their impact was not obvious. The instruments that had emerged from the Rio Conference were the product of a better understanding of the links between nature and the social and economic sectors.

12. Within the legal and institutional systems of international cooperation on environment and development, it was necessary to develop cooperation and coordination among various organs and programmes in a much more efficient way than was currently being done and to meet the goals of the Rio Conference effectively, in accordance with the activities of the various international organizations and United Nations programmes.

13. Although the international community had achieved full consensus on some aspects, the progress achieved thus far, a year after the Rio Conference, had been limited. The commitments made to the developing countries and countries with economies in transition must be translated into action, particularly regarding the provision of financial resources to implement Agenda 21. All that had been achieved up to that point would not stop the risks to the environment from increasing, nor save the planet from pollution, nor eradicate poverty and achieve a sustainable coexistence with nature. The Conference should be seen only as a first step.

14. In Hungary, the implementation of Agenda 21 depended largely on the specific socio-economic problems of the country, which was in the complicated process of transition to a market economy, aggravated by accumulated environmental problems requiring simultaneous solution, and by a shortage of economic resources. The need for economic reconstruction and the scarcity of resources also offered a good opportunity to find advanced, cost-effective, environmentally sound and sustainable solutions, drawing upon the experiences of other nations and working with them. The actual implementation of the objectives set by the Rio Conference and the success of international

(Mr. Lakatos, Hungary)

cooperation in the field now depended to a large extent on national initiatives and the readiness to incorporate more concretely into national programmes the principles, general guidelines and criteria of sustainable development.

15. Mr. AL-HABIB (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that it would not be possible to implement Agenda 21 properly unless practical measures were taken on critical issues like the provision of financial resources, the transfer of technology, and changes in the patterns of consumption. Unfortunately, the agreements reflected in chapter 33 of Agenda 21 regarding the need for additional, predictable and adequate financial resources had not yet been fulfilled. As had been noted during the Rio Conference and reiterated at the first meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development, without sustained economic growth and development, chances for the developing countries to contribute to the protection of the environment were slim, although they had shown their readiness to do so. Given the critical contribution of transfer of technology to the protection of the environment and the close relation between transfer of technology and financing, two courses of action were essential: (a) the transfer of environmentally sound technologies based on specific, actual costs and financial terms, and (b) a reform of patent protection and intellectual property rights, with a view to ensuring that the developing countries had access to such technologies.

16. His delegation attached great importance to the work of the Commission's two ad hoc working groups on financing and transfer of technology, which could contribute effectively to the implementation of Agenda 21 by identifying relevant issues and drawing up appropriate plans of action. It was to be hoped that the ongoing negotiations on the replenishment of the funds of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) could be successfully concluded. Transparency, democracy and universality must be the characteristics of the Fund's decision-making mechanism and its implementation of projects.

17. Desertification was a major environmental problem faced by many countries in the world, particularly in Africa and Asia. The international community must help to ensure the success of the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on desertification and to find the financial and technological means for its implementation. Although the Islamic Republic of Iran, which had long suffered from the effects of desertification and land degradation, attached great importance to international and regional cooperation in combating desertification, it had also implemented various policies at the national level, including the use of the media to increase public awareness of the problem, the acceleration of economic development, land restoration and rehabilitation, industrial development, and the promotion of public participation in decision-making.

18. Mr. HANDIQUE (India) said that environmental problems could not be seen in isolation, and the basic developmental needs of developing countries must be fulfilled before priority could be given to environmental questions. Those countries could participate in the necessary corrective and preventive measures provided they were given the necessary technology and financial resources. It should also be remembered that the international debate on environment or

(Mr. Handique, India)

development should not impinge upon the sovereign rights of each country over its natural resources, and that in order for development to be sustainable it had to be global, which was why a global partnership on the basis of equality and equity was imperative.

19. The developing countries were concerned that while environmental problems were being given the priority and attention that they deserved, adequate efforts did not appear to be forthcoming to tackle them effectively. Development assistance had not increased in a manner commensurate with the newly agreed tasks, nor had mechanisms been established for facilitating the transfer of environmentally sound technology. On the other hand, the adoption of environmental measures was threatening to become a condition for cooperation in trade and development. Diversion of existing resources had also been taking place.

20. As far as achievements were concerned, there had no doubt been considerable work at the institutional level on translating several of the Rio commitments and agreements into reality. In that respect, the results of the first substantive session of the Commission on Sustainable Development should be mentioned, as well as the setting up of ad hoc working groups on finance and technology transfer. The Commission should also stress cross-sectoral issues relating to financial resources and mechanisms, the transfer of technology and national capacity-building.

21. Desertification was a problem which threatened the future of the entire planet, and it must therefore be addressed collectively. However, since it was in Africa that it was manifest in its most extreme form, a start could be made by elaborating an instrument for that region. It must also be emphasized that the problems of desertification and drought were inevitably liked to poverty, underdevelopment and the resulting over-utilization of resources. Poverty and underdevelopment not only constituted threats for the environment, but also implied greater vulnerability to ecological imbalances; that highlighted once again the critical importance of finance and technology.

22. India welcomed the ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity by the required number of countries. Much, however, remained to be done to ensure resources for the scheduled activities, identification of posts and an effective financial structure.

23. He hoped that the negotiations on the restructuring of the Global Environment Facility would be successfully concluded at Cartagena. For the Facility to be effective and to have credibility, it had to be assured of adequate resources. However, it did not appear for the moment that the replenishment of resources was producing the expected results. Since environmental issues affected everyone equally, those countries whose consumer patterns had been the main cause of such problems should, in their own interests, make a greater attempt to compensate for the damage.

24. Mr. ORTIZ GANDARILLAS (Bolivia) called on the international community, particularly the developed countries, to fulfil the commitments entered into at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Maintaining the present state of affairs would mean the continuation of the increasing and unjust economic and social discrepancies between rich and poor, between the industrialized and the impoverished world. It would mean the perpetuation of poverty, hunger, illness, illiteracy and environmental degradation. At Rio, however, the international community had decided to reverse the process with the aim of creating the necessary conditions for satisfying basic needs, improving living standards, protecting ecosystems and world resources and guaranteeing that present and future generations would live in a healthier, more just and more prosperous world.

25. The Conference had established a precedent in terms of broad and democratic participation, created new outlooks in the relationship between man and nature as well as inter-state and intra-state relationships, created new concepts and paradigms and established political commitments at the highest level to the building of a new and more humane international order. The Rio Summit had recognized and consolidated the concept of sustainable development aimed at reorienting the economic and social development of countries towards human beings. It had been recognized that the problem of poverty was a global phenomenon, which both caused and resulted from environmental degradation, and that its elimination required the effort of the entire international community. The developing countries' right to development and the responsibility of industrialized countries for the damage caused to the environment, as well as the need to change current models of consumption and production, had also been recognized.

26. Another basic aspect had been the recognition of the need of developing countries for new and additional financial resources and environmentally sound technology to contribute to the protection of the environment. The will had also been expressed to create a new association between developing countries and industrialized countries for the conservation of the environment through sustainable development, in conjunction with international bodies, non-governmental organizations, public and private institutions, special groups and individual citizens.

27. Developing countries were paying a high price in political, economic, social, human and environmental terms for the disastrous consequences of foreign debt and structural adjustment, to which should be added the costs originating from the implementation of Agenda 21, the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity not to mention the cost of unjust terms of trade, low commodity prices, lack of access to markets and the limited transfer of financial resources. It was necessary to reverse that process, which meant recalling the promises and commitments relating to financial resources for the implementation of Agenda 21 which had been formulated at Rio de Janeiro and had been reaffirmed at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly and the first meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

(Mr. Ortiz Gandarillas, Bolivia)

28. Among the positive aspects were: the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and in particular its working groups on financial resources and technology transfer, the proposal of certain countries to hold seminars on questions related to the Commission's programme of work and the restructuring of the Global Environment Facility which should be oriented towards making it more democratic and increasing the transparency of its activities. The Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, represented a step in the right direction, as did the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification, which would be vitally important because of its political, economic, social and human consequences, in addition to its physical and technical aspects.

29. Bolivia's commitment to implementing Agenda 21 was evidenced in the administrative reorganization of the Government, which included the creation of a Ministry of Economic Development, a Ministry of Human and Social Development and a Ministry of Sustainable Development and Environment; in addition, a Council on Sustainable Development, presided over by the President of the Republic, had been established as a coordinating body. In order to achieve its sustainable development objectives, Bolivia, like other developing countries, needed international cooperation in the form of financial and technological resources. In that regard, he recalled that the report of the Administrative Committee on Coordination had pointed out that in order for the United Nations to respond to the new demands generated by Agenda 21, it must have additional resources. Without true international cooperation, sustainable development would be nothing more than a dream for Bolivia and, probably, for many other developing countries as well, even though they had the political will to fulfil their obligations in that regard.

30. Mr. MARRERO (United States of America) said that the United States continued to pursue the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), especially Agenda 21. At the first session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, Vice-President Gore had emphasized international partnership and national responsibility. The United States welcomed efforts currently under way in the Administrative Committee on Coordination's Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development, which were aimed at developing a coherent scheme for the Organization's support of the recommendations and decisions of the Rio Conference. However, before the issue of overall increases in funding for United Nations agencies could be addressed, adjustments would have to be made in the use of existing resources.

31. President Clinton had announced the creation of the President's Council on Sustainable Development, which would assist in the development of a national strategy for sustainable development, and would help respond to recommendations outlined in Agenda 21. In addition, the United States Agency for International Development would make the promotion of sustainable development its principal objective. The United States and Colombia had developed a joint initiative which called for a meeting on technology transfer, cooperation and capacity-

(Mr. Marrero, United States)

building that would be held in New York. They hoped that the results of that effort would stimulate discussion, both in the context of the Commission on Sustainable Development and at other levels, on how to promote technology cooperation and transfer.

32. Agenda 21 called for the convening of major global conferences, and the United States fully supported that process. In July 1993, his Government had co-sponsored a regional workshop on integrated coastal zone management and responses to climate change, and in 1995 it would host the conference on land-based sources of marine pollution. The United States also supported the convening of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and had made a contribution to the voluntary fund to ensure the effective participation of the small island developing States in the deliberations. The United States had also ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, had signed the Convention on Biological Diversity, and was committed to the early establishment of a convention to combat desertification.

33. The United States had a particular interest in the full and effective implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/215, on large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing, and, in particular, the call for all members of the international community to fully implement a global moratorium on all large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing on the high seas by 31 December 1992. The United States was aware of reports of driftnet fishing in the Mediterranean Sea, the South Atlantic Ocean, and possibly the Indian Ocean, and was concerned that in some cases, fishing vessel owners might seek to frustrate the resolution. In that regard, his Government would welcome a report to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session on implementation of the resolution.

34. At the Earth Summit, the world had demonstrated its commitment to the policy of sustainable development, and the institutional mechanisms for implementing that commitment were now being forged. In that regard, the United States strongly supported efforts to restructure the Global Environment Facility so that it might serve as the financial mechanism for the climate and biodiversity conventions, and fund other agreed projects with global environmental benefits.

35. Mr. KEBEDE (Ethiopia), recalling that the issues of drought and desertification had been given a prominent place in the discussions and conclusions at Rio, stressed the importance of the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification. That was why the Ethiopian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his statement to the General Assembly, had appealed to all Member States to fully support its efforts.

36. According to information collected by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 40 per cent of the earth's land was dry land, 64 per cent of all global dry lands were in Africa and Asia, and 84 per cent of potentially productive dry lands were prone to drought, desertification and other forms of

(Mr. Kebede, Ethiopia)

land degradation. Consequently, the protection and management of land resources through measures to combat deforestation, desertification and drought were the most important steps that the international community should take in order to maintain the quality of the earth's environment and achieve sustainable development.

37. The magnitude of those problems was particularly alarming in Ethiopia. Almost three fourths of the land area of the country was affected by drought and desertification, and the proportion of land with forest cover had gone down from approximately 40 per cent at the turn of the century to about 3 per cent at the present time; the annual rate of deforestation was estimated at 88,000 hectares per year. It was because of erosion and the loss of fertile soil resulting from deforestation that hundreds of thousands of Ethiopians had perished, and over a million people had been displaced. In order to tackle that problem, the transitional Government was formulating a framework for the Ethiopian national action plan to combat drought and desertification.

38. Ethiopia would like to suggest that the following issues be given special emphasis in the convention to combat desertification: the interrelation between drought and desertification problems; importance of the convention as a framework for global environmental protection and sustainable development; strengthening of national, subregional and regional capacities through literacy and public awareness campaigns, training, and alternatives for income generation; effective support of the needs of special groups such as women, youth and children; and eradication of poverty as an indispensable prerequisite for sustainable development.

39. Mr. YOTOV (Bulgaria) said that Bulgaria attached great importance to the environmental issue, and endorsed the efforts of the international community to find practical ways to implement the commitments reached at the Rio Conference. Prompt ratification of the conventions and endorsement of the principles adopted at the Conference would facilitate the entry into force of a new legal framework for environmentally sound global development. Bulgaria recognized that the success of the process which had begun with the Conference would depend, to a large extent, on practical implementation of Agenda 21 at the international, regional and national levels. The establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development was an important step in that direction. Sustainable development would not be possible without the alleviation of poverty, the eradication of armed conflict and the restructuring of international economic relations, in order to enable the developing countries and the countries with economies in transition to become integrated into the world economy. As one of the latter, Bulgaria hoped that in its work, the Committee would take their specific problems into account.

40. His country appreciated the efforts being made by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to facilitate the implementation of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and to prepare the Conference of the Parties, which was scheduled for 1995; their efforts to improve the methodology for national inventories of greenhouse gas

(Mr. Yotov, Bulgaria)

emissions were worthy of mention. It also endorsed the decisions adopted by the Governing Council of UNEP, in particular those concerning a one-year extension of the experimental stage of the United Nations Centre for Urgent Environmental Assistance and the intergovernmental forum on chemical risk assessment and management.

41. Bulgaria was one of the few countries that had already elaborated a national strategy for the environment. It was preparing to finalize a national strategy for protection and management of biological resources and biodiversity and was implementing a coastal management plan as part of the follow-up to the Rio Conference. It believed that countries should create national coordinating structures to oversee the implementation of their environmental strategies and plans. It viewed bilateral or multilateral cooperation within regions for the protection of the environment as a priority. In that connection he drew attention to the regional programme for environmental management prepared by the coastal States of the Black Sea - one of the most polluted seas in the world - which was receiving substantial support from the agencies administering the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The first meeting of the Steering Committee, held in Bulgaria in June 1993, had launched the project for environmental management and protection of the Black Sea, which would help to reverse the process of environmental degradation and over-exploitation of natural resources in the area and would serve as a basis for the elaboration by the coastal countries of a sound environmental strategy for the long-term.

42. Bulgaria agreed that one of the international community's most important tasks was to mobilize the resources needed to implement Agenda 21, including establishing a mechanism to respond adequately to environmental emergencies. It endorsed the steps taken to restructure GEF, which was an important instrument for implementing projects under the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity, and welcomed the initial pledges to the Facility made by some countries. Once the Facility had been replenished, attention and adequate support should continue to be given to the projects launched under the first pilot phase.

43. The transfer of environmentally sound technologies and the building of national capacities in the sphere of environmental protection were vital to incorporating environmental issues into the development process. Both questions were closely tied to the availability of financial resources and foreign investment. Bulgaria was undergoing a process of transition and was therefore having difficulty in obtaining the advanced technologies needed to ensure environmentally sustainable development. Bulgaria believed, therefore, that the issue should be considered in the light of decisions adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development. It also attached particular importance to developing information networks related to the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building, which could help strengthen the managerial and decision-making capacities of countries.

44. Mr. BAHADIAN (Brazil) said that the Commission on Sustainable Development had been established as a result of a historic moment and, in carrying out its work, the Commission must preserve the democratic and consensual nature of the

(Mr. Bahadian, Brazil)

Rio Conference so that Agenda 21 could be implemented. The establishment of the two ad hoc working groups on the transfer of technology and on financial resources showed how critically important those issues were to the effective implementation of Agenda 21. In accordance with the decisions adopted at the Commission's first session, the efforts of those groups should be oriented towards adopting decisions and providing a "political framework" in order to achieve a balanced implementation of Agenda 21. Moreover, the political will demonstrated in carrying out that work would indicate whether implementation of Agenda 21 had begun in earnest. The informal meetings which some countries were holding on particular themes of the Commission's multi-year programme of work were valuable initiatives which could complement the Commission's work. Thus, it was only within the context of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, and with the vital participation of all the Member States, that the recommendations and decisions needed for the effective implementation of Agenda 21 could be elaborated.

45. Access to environmentally sound technologies was vital if developing countries were to achieve sustainable development; in that connection, it was important to ensure those countries access to scientific and technical information, including information on advanced technologies. To that end, Brazil had proposed to the ad hoc working group on the transfer of technology that it should prepare for the Commission's second session a catalogue of current environmentally sound technologies in the public domain related to the themes for 1994, namely, health, fresh water, human settlements, hazardous wastes and harmful chemical substances, specifying the countries which produced those technologies. The ad hoc working group on finance would be responsible for considering the question of the financial resources needed to prepare such a catalogue.

46. Mr. TOURE (Mali) said that his delegation endorsed the statement of the Group of 77. It commended UNEP on its efforts to coordinate the world-wide implementation of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, and also the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office for implementing the Plan in the region. Turning to Agenda 21, his delegation welcomed the establishment of the institutional arrangements to follow up the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/191 of 22 December 1992. In order to implement Agenda 21 effectively, the entire international community had to provide substantial resources. The current economic situation must not prevent implementation of a programme which had been adopted as the basis for sustainable development.

47. As a Sahelian country, two thirds of whose territory was desert, Mali had a direct interest in the negotiation of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa; it therefore supported the decision of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to involve non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations concerned with the struggle against desertification in the negotiating process. It also favoured the idea of negotiating a specific instrument for Africa and endorsed the Intergovernmental Committee's draft resolution relating to that matter. The international

(Mr. Toure, Mali)

convention to combat desertification was not an end in itself. Its implementation would be a challenge to the entire international community, and it was thus important to take steps to establish the appropriate financing mechanisms.

48. Combating desertification was one of the main concerns of the African countries. Mali believed that that struggle was linked to the struggle for development and had elaborated policies and programmes to combat desertification and to preserve the environment. In addition, it was implementing a series of legislative and structural measures intended to create conditions that would enable the population itself to carry out effective action in that area. Its experiences would be presented in the report it would submit as part of the study requested by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

49. With regard to the legal aspects of environmental issues, his Government, in accordance with the objectives of Agenda 21, had set up a ministry to deal specifically with environmental issues. In addition, it was a signatory to the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity and had signed and ratified the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. It reiterated its appeal to States to fulfil their obligations to implement the Bamako Convention on the Ban on the Import of Hazardous Wastes into Africa and on the Control of Their Transboundary Movements within Africa.

50. In recent months Mali had been infested with migratory locusts, and it welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution inviting FAO speedily to implement the emergency plan adopted by the experts from the Sahelian region in order to combat the locust infestation. He thanked those countries that had already taken steps to help the African countries combat that infestation and urged others to follow their example. Unless vigorous and large-scale measures were taken immediately, crops would be endangered and the damage caused by the infestation might be compounded by famine.

51. Mr. CUSTODIO dos SANTOS (Cape Verde) associated himself with the statement made by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and welcomed the steps being taken by the international community to advance the implementation of Agenda 21 and facilitate compliance with the pledges made at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

52. Cape Verde was a country with very few natural resources and its geographical location meant that it had been devastated by drought and desertification. Accordingly, the fundamental principles of sustainable development were at the root of its national development policy and represented a hope for improving the living conditions of its people. Cape Verde was permanently engaged in a struggle against drought and desertification and their social and economic effects. It therefore attached the utmost significance to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The high-level meeting of the Commission had been an important step towards the implementation of the decisions of UNCED, since it had laid the foundation that would permit the Commission to discharge its important mandate. The second high-level meeting

(Mr. Custodio dos Santos, Cape Verde)

should be very carefully prepared so that it could properly address the major issues on the agenda.

53. By adopting resolution 47/188 of 22 December 1992 on the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee, the General Assembly had emphasized the special circumstances of the African continent and the effects of drought and desertification on the lives of a great part of its population. The particularly vulnerable situation of Africa should remind the world of the common responsibility to improve the development prospects of the African countries, without losing sight of the political horizon that should guide the negotiators in tackling technical issues. In that context, his delegation was deeply concerned by the negotiations in progress on the Global Environment Facility. Although it had been decided to enlarge the Facility's membership, that measure would not be effective without the participation of the least developed and other developing countries in the decision making process. It was to be hoped that the final round of negotiations, to be held at Cartagena in December 1993, would lead to a successful outcome conducive to the adoption of transparent and democratic decision making mechanisms. Similarly, taking into account the global dimension of the consequences of desertification, the possibility of financing activities in that regard from the Facility's funds should be taken into consideration.

54. The Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held in Barbados in late April and early May 1994, would for the first time offer an opportunity of dealing with those issues at an international level. The outcome of the Conference would reflect the willingness of the international community to fulfil the promises made at Rio de Janeiro in 1992. During the substantive session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, held in New York in September, the small island developing States had presented valuable suggestions for a draft programme of action. In view of the complexity of the matters at stake, the time scheduled for the purpose was insufficient. It was to be hoped, therefore, that the General Assembly would find a way of continuing the work, as requested in the Preparatory Committee's report.

55. Cape Verde was doing all in its power to make progress regarding the management of marine living resources. The conservation and management of biological diversity and living resources was another issue which should be taken up by the small island developing States, and for which they needed the cooperation of the international community. At the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, measures had been adopted to promote regional cooperation in establishing conservation and management measures that would safeguard the sustainable use of such stocks. It was therefore very important to secure an international agreement on mechanisms for international cooperation, the responsibility of the flag State, responsibility for compliance with the agreement's provisions on the part of the port State and compatibility and coherence between national and international conservation measures for the same stocks.

56. Mr. LOHIA (Papua New Guinea) said that his delegation associated itself fully with the statements made by the representative of Colombia, on behalf of the Group of 77, the representative of Vanuatu, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States, and the representative of New Zealand on behalf of the countries of the South Pacific Forum.

57. The Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be held in Barbados in April 1994, was one of the important results of the Earth Summit and at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly there had been unanimous support for the approval of its convening. The objectives of the Conference were spelled out clearly in Agenda 21, and in General Assembly resolution 47/189 of 22 December 1992, which would serve as a guide for the international community in establishing an appropriate framework for the implementation of the recommendations of the Global Conference. At that Conference, the international community would demonstrate its commitment to the important undertakings agreed to at Rio de Janeiro. His delegation welcomed the progress made thus far in the preparatory process and called on the Second Committee to support the convening of a resumed substantive session of the Preparatory Committee early in 1994, to ensure that the remaining preparatory arrangements were made before the beginning of the Barbados Conference. His delegation hoped that the international community would fully understand the special situation of the small island developing States, adversely affected by environmental problems such as climate change and the rise of the sea level, and would assist them through a practical and viable programme of action. He was sure that the Conference would be successful and urged the international community to show good will by fulfilling its commitments for the achievement of sustainable development.

58. Papua New Guinea was endowed with substantial straddling and highly migratory fishstocks. It believed that the Conference on that question would present an opportunity for finding effective solutions paving the way for international partnership in the conservation and management of marine living resources. At the national level, his Government had installed a rigorous monitoring process for issuing of licences to fish within the exclusive economic zones, and it believed that it was essential to take steps as soon as possible to conserve and manage those resources in order to protect their future.

59. It should also be pointed out that, although there were many regional fisheries agreements, conservation and management had not been effective. Papua New Guinea therefore believed it was necessary to create appropriate mechanisms as soon as possible, including financial and technical assistance. It also believed that there was an urgent need for fisheries reform within zones of national jurisdiction. The outcome of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks should be regarded as legally and politically binding as well as constituting a moral obligation. To that end there should be a new global treaty, a protocol to the United Nations on the Law of the Sea, and regulations or norms of conduct governing its implementation as soon as it entered into force. However, Papua New Guinea believed that the most important factor in achieving those objectives was the political willingness of Governments to ensure effective protection under the high seas regime.

60. Mr. MARKER (Pakistan) mentioned the various activities which had taken place or were under way to fulfil the important commitments made by the international community in 1992 at the Rio Conference, at which a significant advance had been made towards global recognition of the twin goals of development with equity and development without damage to the environment. The international community must ensure that inequality in international economic relations was not reproduced in the new partnership to promote sustainable development. To that end, the Commission on Sustainable Development should consider at its second substantive session the question of the unsustainable patterns and lifestyles in developed countries, in order to request specific quantitative and qualitative commitments from those countries.

61. If the developing countries were to realize the goals of sustainable development, a supportive international economic climate was required which would give their exports access to the markets of developed countries and not lead to conditional or unilateral "green" protectionist measures which, although they contradicted the principles of a free trading system, had gained ground under the guise of environmental concern. It would also be useful for the Commission to receive information on the attention given to the environmental effects of exports from developed to developing countries.

62. His delegation considered that the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development to set up two ad hoc working groups on technology transfer and financial resources was highly significant because the first would determine the measures required to implement the commitments made at Rio on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and the second should identify the exact sum required to implement each programme area of Agenda 21 and mechanisms for financing them. It was vital that funding should be provided to enable experts from developing countries to attend meetings of the working groups in order to ensure the balanced outcome of their work.

63. As far as the restructuring of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) on the basis of transparency and universality was concerned, his delegation considered that balanced representation of developing countries was essential and since the agreed amount of $2 billion over a period of three years was not enough to meet the needs of the Agenda 21 conventions, it hoped that the restructuring of the Facility would lead to an increase in contributions.

64. His delegation had closely followed the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification and sincerely hoped that the regional protocols would be negotiated in due time and would address the problem of land degradation caused by waterlogging and salinity, because in a country like Pakistan, with an economy dependent on agriculture, the loss of cultivable land had had a significant impact on the lives of the rural population.

65. Mr. VALENZA (Italy) endorsed the observations made by Belgium on behalf of the twelve member States of the European Union and underlined the need to focus not only on the major environmental questions but also on problems relating to the immediate environment in which people lived, for example, the deplorable housing conditions of the poor in cities which helped to perpetuate the vicious

(Mr. Valenza, Italy)

cycle of poverty. In developing countries the authorities virtually ignored informal settlements, even though a high percentage of the population lived in them. That meant that the necessary infrastructure and services were provided outside of official channels, often in an inefficient and costly manner. Agenda 21 stressed the investment that was needed to upgrade settlements and mentioned the role of local and municipal authorities as well as the need to build appropriate institutional capacity.

66. His Government had shown its support for Habitat II by making a contribution to the Voluntary Fund, and had actively participated in the efforts of Italian non-governmental organizations to upgrade informal settlements and in the coordination of the working group on urbanization of the Water and Sanitation Collaboration Council (WASSANCO). It was also ready to work with the settlements upgrading programme of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, which was intended to draw on positive experiences and activities in progress with the aim of improving, testing and disseminating planning tools, formulating criteria for information and implementation and establishing guidelines for settlement upgrading on the basis of a network of cooperation with the countries of the South in all relevant sectors. His Government commended the Centre's initiative and urged the international community to support its work and all United Nations activities which might improve the living conditions in informal settlements.

67. Mr. MOLDAN (Czech Republic) said that the progress made thus far in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) had focused on a more precise definition of basic questions such as the transfer to technology in certain sectors, financial resources, the problems of desertification and the development of small island States. Governments and other public and private decision-making bodies were actively working to achieve the objective of sustainable development, but it had proved difficult to assess the results as there were no appropriate indicators, and commonly used indicators such as gross national product and resource and pollution flows were inadequate. The new indicators, whose necessity was underlined in Agenda 21 and the report of the Commission, must take into account interactions between environmental, demographic, social and developmental parameters and reflect environmental and developmental conditions and trends, and in that way would enable the Commission to assess consistently and accurately the situation in each country. By tracking progress over time it would be possible to evaluate the effectiveness and direction of ongoing policies and introduce appropriate corrections. It was important to avoid a situation in which, in order to reach an international consensus on the need for sustainable development, it would prove impossible to make more specific progress due to the lack of reliable indicators of sustainability.

68. Mr. OLANIYAN (Organization of African Unity (OAU)) said that Agenda 21, one of the most important documents for the promotion of equitable, genuine and lasting development at the global level, was indissolubly linked in Africa to the solution of the serious problems of development and economic growth and the eradication of poverty. It was for that reason that within the framework of activities undertaken at the national, regional and international levels, OAU

(Mr. Olaniyan)

had been very active on those issues of Agenda 21 which were of interest to Africa's development. Drought and desertification were fundamental problems of the continent and the OAU Council of Ministers had responded to them with a resolution on the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification. OAU had played a leading role in the negotiation process and hoped that the Convention would be finalized by June 1994.

69. OAU supported United Nations activities to implement other aspects of Agenda 21, in particular the preparations for the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and urged the United Nations to make every effort to resolve the particular problems of those States. It was essential to make progress in elaborating the draft programme of action in such a way that the Conference could achieve concrete results.

70. OAU welcomed the restructuring of the Global Environment Facility and the progress made thus far. However, it was essential to stress that the success of the programmes developed on the availability of adequate financial resources. In that respect, it was gratifying to note that donor countries had fixed an objective of US$ 2 billion as a target for the Global Environment Facility, which should provide momentum for its operation.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.